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Explaining ‘power to’: incubation and agenda building in an urban regime.

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The urban regime theory has placed the decisional power of urban policy makers in the foreground. From this perspective, enduring governing coalitions can in fact manage to change the consolidated urban policy mix to foster great changes in the social and economic context. The urban regime theory labels this capacity ‘power to’.

Although this higher capacity has frequently been affirmed, the literature has neglected to look at the framing mechanisms and the policy-making processes that allow a new agenda to emerge and be implemented. The present article has the aim of addressing this matter, and in particular of trying to answer two main questions: 1) if an incubation phase lays the foundations for the emergence of a new policy agenda, how does this process take place? 2) Is the new agenda a by-product of sectorial policy negotiations or is it the output of a collective effort? The findings of an in-depth analysis on a case study are presented and discussed in order to address these questions.

Since the beginning of the 1990s, urban governance studies (Logan and Swanstrom 1990; Clark 1994; Harding 1999; John 2001; Savitch and Kantor 2002; DiGaetano and Strom 2003; Denters and Rose 2005) have criticized pure structuralist theories, which have considered urban policy-making as being totally dependent on the dynamics of global capitalism (Peterson 1981). From the urban governance perspective, although not free from structural constraints, local actors can exercise a significant influence on urban policies and affect the life conditions of residents (Wolman and Goldsmith 1990; Di Gaetano and Lawless 1999; Savitch and Kantor 2002; Sellers 2002; Di Gaetano and Strom 2003; Pinson 2010; Greasely, Wolman and John 2011; Wolman 2012; Pierre 2014).

The literature on urban neoliberalism and entrepreneurialism has highlighted that the present world-wide ‘generalization and standardization’ of urban policies (Beal and Rousseaux 2014), which are generally focused on the imperatives of economic competitiveness and city attractiveness, could be symptoms of non-local factors, such as economic pressures and the hegemony of neoliberal ideology (Jessop 2002; Peck e Tickell 2002; Brenner 2004; Theodore, Peck and Brenner 2011; Theodore and Peck 2012; Davies 2014). However, the local welfare state is not dead and wealth redistribution has not been abandoned totally, especially in European cities (Le Galès 2002).¹ Moreover, several ‘alternative’ economic policies are spreading in diverse urban contexts, providing evidence of the existence of a not too narrow scope for urban governance (Fuller 2010; Geddes and Sullivan 2011).²

Within this paradigm, the urban regime theory, developed from the works of Elkin (1987) and Stone (1989), has placed the decisional power of urban policy-makers in the foreground. From the urban regime perspective, not only can local actors systematically affect the context through their public decisions but, in particular situations, stable and enduring governing coalitions can even change the whole consolidated policy mix of a city through the implementation of a new policy agenda. Stone (2001; 2005; 2006) has

¹ With reference to the capacity of eliminating inequalities, Stone (2004, p. 15) stated that “local governance itself is not potent enough to bring that about, but it can make a difference between aggravating or ameliorating the inequalities of a stratified society”.

² See, for example, the recent symposiums and special issues published in three international reviews: *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 2010, 34 (1); *Métropoles*, 2014 (15); *Urban Studies*, 2014, 51 (15).

labeled ‘power to’ as being the capacity to promote and sustain new urban agendas and to foster great changes in the social and economic context.

Since the first work by Stone on Atlanta, several studies have been conducted on urban regimes, in particular in the USA, but also in some European and Asian countries. However, the literature has mainly placed emphasis on “seemingly static public-private relationships”, and has largely neglected to focus on the *power to* and its dynamics (Sapotichne and Jones 2012, p. 446). Many scholars have in fact mainly focused attention on the structure and features of governance arrangements, on factors that can favor or damage urban regimes, and on the brokering or steering role of specific actors (De Leon 1992; Di Gaetano and Klemanski 1993; Strom 1996; John and Cole 1998; DiGaetano and Lawless 1999; Stone et al. 2001; Dormois 2006; Holman 2007; Tretter 2008; Belligni and Ravazzi 2012). Recognizing this gap, Stone himself (2001) stated that a process perspective on decisional mechanisms could actually offer a complementary viewpoint which could be useful to integrate the existing knowledge on urban regimes. In particular, the analysis on how common purposes are shaped by governing coalitions and how a subsequent new policy agenda emerges could help understand why governance arrangements can last without formal enforcement, and could help identify the existence of clear policy-making patterns in urban regimes.

The present article has the aim of addressing the matter of ‘power to’. In particular, the analysis has been driven by two main research questions. The first concerns what can be called the ‘incubation phase’. According to Stone (2001; 2004), agenda building is in fact preceded by a phase in which a common frame is shaped by the local élite (Stone 2001; 2004). If this is true, the incubation phase has remained a black box, and the literature has not yet shed light on the mechanisms and processes that characterize this early stage of an urban regime. Therefore, this article addresses the issue: how does the incubation process take place and does it present a particular pattern? The second question pertains to the emergence of a new policy agenda. The literature on urban regimes has also neglected this policy-making dimension to a great extent. In order to contribute to the filling of this gap, the article in particular focuses on the following issue: when a new agenda emerges within an urban regime in order to change the consolidated urban policy mix, how does this process develop? Is the new agenda a by-product of sectorial policy negotiations that take place within a general frame, or is it the outcome of a collective effort?

In order to address these two questions, an in-depth analysis of a case study is presented. The case refers to the establishment of an urban regime and the emergence of a new urban agenda in the city of Turin, one of the three old poles of the Italian industrial triangle (together with Milan and Genoa) and the capital of the Italian automotive industry. During the 1980s, the city underwent a long socio-economic crisis, which was mainly caused by deindustrialization processes that produced several social problems - companies and jobs were lost and the population diminished. After a period of relative inaction, the city attempted to react through the collaborative action of a wide governing coalition and the implementation of a new urban agenda. A heterogeneous public-private governing coalition promoted what was then an ambitious new agenda, through which the consolidated policy mix was changed to foster the start of a new urban development model.

The case study was carried out over a period of seven years (2006-2012) as part of a wider in-depth research that addressed several issues: the emergence of the urban regime and its features, the outputs that the regime has produced, the consolidation

mechanisms, the urban governance coalition and the community power structure (Belligni and Ravazzi 2012; 2013). The processes and mechanisms through which the new agenda has been shaped and implemented are the focus of the present work. The whole research has been conducted adopting a mix of methods and sources: documentary sources, in-depth semi-structured interviews with fifty individuals³, network analysis (Barabasi 2002; Kadushin 2004; Vargiu 2007) and a process-sequencing method (George and Bennet 2005; Howlett 2009). The latter method has in particular been applied to answer the aforementioned two research questions.

The article is organized as follows. The next section frames the issue. Section 2 traces the profile of the case study, and briefly explains the innovations of the urban agenda implemented over the last twenty years. The third, fourth and fifth sections describe the key sequences of events that have led to the emergence of a common frame, the formation of the governing coalition and the construction of a new urban agenda. The findings are summarized in the conclusion section.

Urban regime and policy agenda

The policy mix of a city (as well as of any other territory) is usually relatively stable or just undergoes marginal adjustments (Rast 2001; Savitch and Kantor 2002; Sapotichne and Jones 2012). However, according to the urban regime theory, it can change radically when a new urban agenda is promoted and implemented through the mobilization of extraordinary efforts and resources. The focus of a new urban agenda is not just the implementation of a particular project or a single investment program, but the promotion of a set of community-wide problem-solving efforts, whose aim is not to solve the whole range of problems, but to strategically redirect urban policies toward prioritarian directions (John and Cole 1998; Stone 2002; 2004).

The implementation of a new urban agenda becomes possible through the action of relatively long and stable public-private governing coalitions (Stone 1993; 2001; 2004; John and Cole 1998). From this perspective, an urban regime “provides a capacity to act and bring resources to bear on the identifying agenda to a degree that would not happen without the arrangements that constitute the regime” (Stone 2001, p. 21). Three main elements explain the higher capacity of an urban regime to foster a large change in the consolidated policy mix of a city: 1) informality of the relationships between the stakeholders, which favors the expansion of the resource base; 2) repeated interactions, which favor the establishment of long-lasting cooperative games, and give stability to the relationships in the case of temporary dissatisfaction of some interests; 3) adequacy of the resources in relation to the goals (Stone 2001).

Recalling the agenda-setting theories (Baumgartner and Jones 1993) and to a certain extent also the multiple streams theory on the political success of ideas (Kingdon 1984), Stone stressed the importance of urban regime incubation, during which strategic actors manage to frame some common issues in a way that favors the convergence of other actors toward them. Moreover, the credibility of the purposes and a certain

³ The respondents were chosen because of their privileged position, in terms of proximity to the decision-making processes, and/or their advocacy role within different policy networks: politicians, local governors, civil servants, members of the main local interest groups, journalists, academics and managers of public, private and quasi-governmental organizations. Some people were also interviewed twice during the period. For details about the methodology see Belligni and Ravazzi (2012).

institutionalization of the governance arrangements⁴ can help the governing coalition to maintain the direction of the agenda in the medium-long run (Stone 2004; Dormois 2006; Belligni and Ravazzi 2012). If this is true, how do these issues end up being shared by different groups with different and often divergent interests and visions? Tretter (2008), analyzing the case of Glasgow, showed how an exogenous frame (the one offered by the 'European City of Culture' Call) can favor the convergence of élite local members toward a core idea. The present case study will shed some light on the processes and mechanisms through which this process of framing can develop.

Once some goals gather support from a wide range of local actors, the emergence of a clearly defined agenda cannot be taken for granted. "Alternative agendas come on the scene with frequency, but typically fade away because they lack supporting elements" (Stone 2004, p. 12). Therefore, how do issue concerns come to be specified as purposes, and how are they linked, enlarged and refined for action?

By stating 'the puzzle to be solved is how cooperation can be achieved without an overarching system of command or without reliance on a system of market exchange' (Stone 2004, 10), Stone pointed out the importance of behind-the-scenes negotiations as the main mode of governance to generate a shared policy agenda. However, he has also recognized that no urban regime can be built entirely on selective incentives, and that schemes of cooperation can be multifaceted. Analyzing the case of Saint-Étienne, Beal, Dormois and Pinson (2010) suggested that the lack of mutual recognition processes among the élite local members was the main cause of the city's weak capacity to shape a new strategy of local redevelopment. Rast (2009) stated that innovation in governmental structures and in formal political institutions also helped the governing capacity of the post-war Chicago urban regime. This paper tries to add some further empirical findings, by focusing on the decision-making processes that have led to the emergence of the new agenda in Turin.

A new agenda for a post-industrial city

Turin is one of the largest cities in Italy. It was the first capital of the newly founded Italian State in the XIX century, and it is the site of the headquarters of the FIAT automobile industry (now FIAT-Chrysler Automobiles). The city experienced an economic and demographic boom in the 1950s and 1960s, which was mainly driven by the manufacturing sector, and then a period of change from the end of the 1970s. Over these last decades, the city has lost more than 10% of the population and of its GDP, and has seen the local economy change from an industrial-type economy to a service one.

In the mid-1990s, the city started to react to this situation through the introduction of a new urban agenda, with the aim of fostering a systemic change of the consolidated policy mix and at least a partial change in its social and economic conditions. During the first half of the 1980s, Turin was still known as a city that was mainly attentive to social policies and education. The Left-wing governments that ruled the city over the previous decades had focused efforts on improving municipal welfare, public education services and the quality of life in peripheral neighborhoods, and relationships with the business community and in particular with FIAT had been conflictual (Locke 1995).

⁴ Dormois (2006, 852) labels this institutionalization process with the happy expression 'stabilisation de règles et de récits'.

After the 1985 elections, while the socio-economic crisis was getting worse, a new Centrist five-party coalition replaced the Leftist government. This new coalition, which governed until 1992, was unstable and quarrelsome, and was dominated by “gain politicians” who managed public resources in a personalistic (and often clientelistic) way. In that period, the policy-makers produced disjointed plans, which often resulted in decisional impasses. In 1992, after the fourth collapse of the party coalition and the arrest of many public officials and politicians on charges of corruption, a special national commissioner replaced the city council. An unprecedented political crisis caused the already critical socio-economic situation to become worse.

In April 1993, the commissioner decided on new elections, which resulted in the unexpected victory of a new mayor, Valentino Castellani, a moderate Catholic professor from the Politecnico di Torino (Technical Engineering University), who was supported by a novel alliance between the Left Democrats Party (Partito dei Democratici di Sinistra, PDS⁵) and the local liberal bourgeoisie. The new mayor led the municipal administration for two consecutive terms of office until 2001, when a professional PDS politician, Sergio Chiamparino, replaced the former mayor for another two consecutive terms. Although the two mayors were different in background and style of action, the latter continued in the wake of the former, both maintaining the alliance with the liberal bourgeoisie and implementing most of the projects that had been planned during the previous years (Belligni and Ravazzi 2012).

The new agenda that was implemented over these twenty years was composed of three main policy areas. The first set of policies focused on housing expansion, renovation of the urban center, and major infrastructures: the most important public works involved placing the railway underground (more than 7 km of open-air tracks, which had previously split the city, were laid underground), construction of the first subway line, and more than 110 million cubic meters of new buildings in abandoned industrial areas (Figure 1), urban regeneration projects in some poor neighbourhoods, the expansion of the two academic institutions (the Politecnico di Torino and Turin University), the restoration of many buildings as well as all the squares and monuments in the historical center, the construction of a new railway station and the renovation of the old one. The 2006 Winter Olympic Games, which Turin unexpectedly gained in 2000, brought huge financial resources to the city, contributing to this set of policies and to its updating through new infrastructures and buildings. The visible result was a drastic reshaping of the urban landscape.

Figure 1 here

The second set of policies evokes the idea of an urban district for the ‘knowledge sector’: research centers, business incubators and poles to host innovative companies have been created since the mid-1990s (Table 1).

Table 1 here

⁵ After the fall of Communism, the Communist Party split into two parties: the PRC, which was an expression of the more radical wing, and the PDS, a more center-left-wing party. The PDS then became the Democrats of the Left (Democratici di Sinistra, DS) in 1998 and the Democratic Party (PD) in 2007, which combined most of the DS members and a part of the moderate catholic politicians.

Last but not least, the city invested a huge amount of resources in activities and projects for entertainment and leisure⁶. Large events pertaining to the arts and design, to music and film festivals, to food and wine fairs became the most visible components of the new cultural life of the city, but a completely renewed museum system and new theatres were also launched, and a Film Commission was created in order to attract movie companies to the region (Table 2).

Table 2 here

Social policies and environmental policies were not neglected totally and the local government continued to provide social services and to invest in some environmental projects, but the resources mobilized for these policy areas did not increase over the decades, and the few efforts that were made were not remotely adequate to address the new social and environmental problems of the city (increasing inequality, immigrant integration, high level of air pollution, etc.).⁷

As far as a definition of the Turin agenda is concerned, scholars usually distinguish between two main types of urban agenda: pro-welfare or social-centred and pro-growth or market-centred (Stone and Sanders 1987; Jones and Bachelor 1993; Stone 1993; 2004; Di Gaetano and Lawless 1999; Quilley 2000).⁸ Pro-welfare agendas promote strict land-use regulations, investments in infrastructures and public services, education and social assistance policies, as well as the redistribution of resources and functions in favour of the poorest citizens and the most problematic neighborhoods. Market-centred agendas instead tend to neglect social policies in favor of a public action that has the direct aim of sustaining the productive sectors and facilitating commercial exchanges, through the provision of subsidies, the construction of highways, of railways and of logistic platforms, and the concentration of functions and facilities downtown (Savitch and Kantor 2002).⁹

On the whole, it can be stated that Turin has moved from a highly social-centered and low market-centered policy mix toward a new clearly market-centered and less social-centered agenda. It is instead questionable whether this new agenda can be defined as a clear neoliberal project. According to the literature, local neoliberalism is characterized by policies that promote free market, citizen mobility, low taxation and public spending reductions (Imbroscio 2011; Blanco, Griggs and Sullivan 2014). In this context, the Turin agenda presents contrasting elements: the municipal and regional regulations on land use and also those on social services were reformed, but not substantially downsized to give way to free market dynamics; gentrification processes took place in some central neighborhoods, but housing programs were mainly focused

⁶ This strategic axis is in part different from the one that characterizes the entertainment machines of some American cities (Lloyd and Clark 2001), but it has similarities with some experiences of other European cities (Harding et al. 2004; Rast 2009; Rousseau 2009).

⁷ In Turin, like in other urban regimes, a slogan was also coined as a flagship of the new course of action: the Atlanta slogan was 'the city too busy to hate' and Chicago was named 'the city that works', while Turin was labeled 'the city always on the move'.

⁸ DiGaetano and Lawless (1999, 550) distinguished another type of urban agenda: the 'caretaker' agenda, which is 'confined to' routine service provision such as police and fire protection, refuse collection, and the like'. However, according to the authors, a caretaker agenda is promoted without any effort to achieve real social or economic changes through urban policies or programs.

⁹ Obviously, as Savitch and Kantor (2002) demonstrated, urban agendas do not usually completely neglect the policies of the other category.

on supporting citizens in their own homes rather than fostering their mobility toward other places (with the exception of a part of the small XVIII Century central district); most funding was provided by the public sector (municipal, regional or national), and the municipal government both took out huge loans and increased local taxes in order to sustain such an extraordinary financial effort.¹⁰

Three purposes for a common goal

It is necessary to go back to the end of the 1980s in order to investigate whether some common aims emerged before the formation of a definite urban regime and the introduction of a new agenda. It was in fact in those years that the increasing social and economic problems became *urban* problems, which had to be faced through urban policies and not just through long-awaited national initiatives. The closure of some factories and the loss of jobs took on a 'physical' shape: urban voids became visible to all the citizens and the city risked losing its identity. Groups of intellectuals and Left-wing politicians began to reflect publicly on the nature of the crisis and on the tangible risks for the city.

The image of a dual city emerged from books and conferences that were written and organized by local politicians and academics (Berta and Chiamparino 1985; Bagnasco 1986; 1990), and the inability to adapt the local society to the changing economic context was blamed on the local political class of the 1970s and 1980s. There were four main objections: a) its industrialism, namely the anachronistic belief of the politicians that manufacturing companies should have remained the only drivers of the local development, b) its tendency to reproduce the divisions of the industrial environment in the political system, c) the lack of a negotiation habit in both industrial and political relations, d) the lack of public management skills. This interpretation, which initially divided the political forces, became hegemonic in just a few years. Sergio Chiamparino, who was a PC leader, recalled that period with the following words:

Already in 1984, before some books explicitly addressed the issue, some party colleagues and I presented a document in which we asked our comrades to change perspective. [...] In some of us, a paradigm shift had matured, and we tried to explain to those who did not think alike why our view was the most appropriate to deal with a changing society. But it actually took some years before our efforts were successful.

In the same period, two civil society groups became active and started to press the political class with a list of requests. The first group (the so-called 'Group of 70') was composed of businessmen and professionals led by a powerful banker, who was also a member of the Board of Directors of the local Chamber of Commerce. The group published a pamphlet entitled 'An alternative to decline', which suggested some main policy measures: reviving the construction industry, investing in infrastructures and privatising municipal public service companies (Torino Incontra 1992). The second group was composed of academics from the Politecnico di Torino. They started thinking about how the city could facilitate the internationalization of the research sector and they ended up convinced that the city had to create a liveable urban

¹⁰ Turin is currently at the top of the national ranking pertaining to the level of property taxation and one of the most indebted cities in Italy.

environment, in order to attract students and scholars. One of the protagonists of this group was Valentino Castellani, who recalled that period, after almost twenty-five years, with the following words:

We had two main paradigms in mind, which came out after years of contacts and experiences with other European and American academic institutions. The first had to do with internationalization. We thought it was necessary to have not only international relations but to attract people and talents here from the rest of the world. In order to push the lever to internationalization, the urban environment had to become adequate. Therefore, the second paradigm was the necessary relationship of our academic institution with the local government.

A common goal emerged from these convergent forces: the city would have to focus on an extraordinary pro-growth effort. One businessman and member of the Board of Directors of the Chamber of Commerce remembered the slogan that most civil society leaders and Center-Left wing politicians used to repeat in that period: ‘we must start with boosting wealth, because only if the cake is larger can we manage to better redistribute the slices’ (I.14).

In a few months, three purposes about how this common goal could be reached became popular and widely shared. They clearly seemed close to the ideas that had been circulating in the second half of the 1980s. First, ‘the city had to move beyond FIAT and abandon industrialism in favor of a diversification of the local economy, with the automotive industry leaving room for new kinds of activities’ (I.41). The second idea concerned the policy mix for the upcoming years: in order to avert decline, the city ‘had to start with some short-term policies to boost economic growth’ (I.30). The third suggestion was addressed to the political system, asking it to ‘innovate not only the outputs but also the processes’ (I.4), through the formation of a great alliance between the moderate forces of the Center-Left and the liberal groups of the business class.

In short, besides the partially aleatoric nature of these concurring events, some of which happened independently of one another (Belligni and Ravazzi 2012), the framing process that posed the base for the subsequent emergence of the new agenda took place through relatively linear dynamics, which broadly recall the classic dispute model (Felstiner et al. 1980): first a process of ‘naming’, the formation of a common perception of the main local problems and their proper urban dimension; then, a more ideological process of ‘blaming’, which developed in the form of an explicit showdown with the past, through the construction of a narrative on the missed modernization of the city; finally, a more purposive phase (‘claiming’), with the shaping of some core beliefs and some key purposes for a common goal.

Regime-building

In 1993, the Parliament approved a public administration reform that included some new rules for local governments: among others, a new two-round electoral system and a strong mayor-type model of local government. Turin was the first Italian city to use the new electoral rules and to experience the new form of government; this took place in April 1993.

The upcoming elections offered the opportunity of testing the wide convergence toward the common purposes and the main goal of a systemic pro-growth change. The

PDS chose to run with a candidate who was seen favourably by the liberal bourgeoisie, not only against the Right-wing candidate, but also against the mayor who had led the city during the 1970s, and who decided to run again with the support of the radical Left-wing parties. The two main policy entrepreneurs involved in the operation remembered that time with these words:

I met the PDS secretary at the Politecnico di Torino, in an informal meeting with the Rector, a prominent entrepreneur and two academic intellectuals, in order to find the name of a common candidate. On that occasion, we agreed on the person who then actually won the 1993 elections.

In 1992-1993, there was a convergence of different forces, united by a common goal, and the first step of this convergence was the choice of a common candidate for the municipal elections. [...] The choice was not so linear, it was not a painless process without conflicts: we were initially criticized both by my party [PDS] colleagues and by the business community.

The candidate, Valentino Castellani, won the elections at the second ballot. After the victory, the governing coalition had not yet established either clear boundaries or consolidated patterns of cooperation, and the business community was waiting for the first public actions that could demonstrate the existence of an effective alliance. As Castellani recognized, the first period as mayor was a trial period:

The first months were terrible. I knew I had been elected with the support of a wide and completely new coalition, and I knew that everybody was looking at my first steps with the aim of understanding whether I would be able to consolidate the coalition and build some kind of trust among the members.

The mayor and his entourage decided to start with the reform of the old Master Plan (Piano Regolatore Generale, PRG). The new PRG introduced many building permits and a major structural plan to place the huge railway line, which had divided the city into two parts for more than sixty years, underground. With the new PRG, some of the major public works that had been on hold for decades also received a decisive impulse. The decisional process that preceded the PRG reform and the start of the first major public works was incredibly fast: 'in five months, we presented the new PRG and we then started the first public works' (I.22). These choices actually favored the creation of a climate of trust with the local business community.

A wide and heterogeneous governing coalition became consolidated in just a few years, and, in some ways, it managed to blend corporatist, managerial and pluralist traits (DiGaetano and Lawless 1999): politicians and civil servants, academics from both the University and the Politecnico di Torino, managers of the non-profit sector, as well as businessmen and civil society leaders at the vertex of the main organizations of interest (Belligni and Ravazzi 2012).

As in many other urban regimes, over the following two decades Turin also witnessed the institutionalization of public-private organizations, such as foundations that were created in the culture sector, development agencies that focused on tourism, ICT and movie production, and *Torino Internazionale*, the association that served to fuel wide support for the regime. On the whole, the governance arrangements worked around some key organizations: the Municipality, the Region, the two academic

institutions, the two bank foundations based in the city, and also FIAT in the first phase of the regime.¹¹

City dialogue

The first policy change in urban planning led to a visible urban expansion and, in just a few years, the city was able to count on one of the highest rates of real estate transactions in Italy. However, the effects on the real estate market were not sufficient to brighten the gloomy horizon of the local economy. The disgruntled electorate of the 1997 elections shifted partially toward the Right-wing candidate in the first round. In the second round, the incumbent mayor won, but just by a few thousand votes, to the astonishment of the governmental team and the members of the governing coalition.

Shocked by this unexpected electoral result, the mayor decided to undertake a new route: to enlarge the boundaries of the governing coalition through a structured process of discussion with a wider group of civil society leaders. The process soon started and ended up with the publication of the first 'Strategic Plan for the promotion of the city'. In February 2001, after three and a half years fifty prominent members of the local civil society met at the Politecnico di Torino to unanimously subscribe the Plan, which contained 6 strategic 'lines', 20 'objectives' and 84 'actions'. The Strategic Plan was obviously not a concrete agenda and, like other Strategic Plans, it had more a symbolic value than a clear policy aim. Many ideas and actions were vague and unfeasible, and several expressions were similar to the ones of other 'urban visioning exercises' (Parnell and Robinson 2006, 339): 'sustained economic growth', 'quality of life', 'knowledge economy', 'empowerment', 'attractiveness', 'world-class city', and so on. However, the core contents of the document also confirmed the common purposes that had been shared by the governing coalition during the previous years, and officialized some cornerstones for future policies¹².

The process that preceded the Plan is the key factor that can explain how the aims were translated into a shared program of public policies. The 'power to' of the urban regime took place through what can be called a 'city dialogue', which can be considered elitist because of the exclusion of opposition groups, associations and ordinary citizens, but it was also closer to a collective effort than a simple mix of sectorial negotiations.

The mayor started with a first phase, called 'Forum for development', in which all the bankers, academics, members of interest groups, chief executives of corporations, as well as renowned ecclesiastical personalities and intellectuals in the city were invited to participate. One of the mayor's collaborators recalled this phase as an attempt to concretize general goals within somewhat clearer policy boundaries:

The Forum lasted about a year. We met approximately once every two months with all the prominent personalities of the city - members of the Industrial Union, the Chamber of Commerce, trade unions, academic institutions, FIAT etc. - to discuss not only about how to revive the city, but also how to put our common purposes into practice.

¹¹ For a detailed explanation of how the public, private and quasi-governmental organizations contributed to the different axes of the policy agenda and to what extent, see Belligni and Ravazzi (2012).

¹² Pinson (2002) rightly stated that the vagueness of a Strategic Plan can also be interpreted as a way of allowing a more flexible adaptation of the purposes to a changing urban environment and to the evolving urban challenges.

Concrete policies were not actually formulated in the Forum meetings, but some suggestions about how to diversify the local economy began to emerge and become consolidated. In order to attract tourists, workers and capital, the city would have to become more beautiful and accessible, and the image of the grey town of the past would have to be converted into a new one, focusing on innovation and creativity. A member of the Forum remembered the leitmotif of those meetings:

We established, all together, that Turin had to become a city of tourism, culture and innovation. The city had to attract tourists and talent, not only by improving the appearance and the possibility of enjoyment of public spaces, but also by creating a real 'culture system' and by stimulating the development of a knowledge economy based on highly skilled labour, creativity, and high technology. These ideas were already latent, but we gave them shape and an official status during the Forum.

Once the main policy domains of the urban agenda had been outlined, it was considered imperative to design more concrete directions, in order to prevent the fragmentation of the proposed projects and initiatives. This second phase was structured combining information and discussion. Even though they were both closely intertwined, the informative session was mainly organized to build a platform of shared knowledge, while the dialogic phase was designed as a set of small group meetings with the task of formulating concrete ideas for future policies. A group of academic researchers was commissioned to draft a document on the social and economic situation of the city, and to propose some relevant issues that needed to be discussed. Some open seminars, focused on the experiences of other European cities, were held: the mayors of Bilbao, Stockholm, Munich, Glasgow and Barcelona were invited to talk about the progress made by the cities and to explain the development policies that their cities had implemented over the last few decades. Starting from this shared background, about sixty stakeholders and policy-makers (some of them already involved in the Forum), who were divided into working groups, met for about a year and a half. The working groups did not refer to any policy area in particular, but to general problems that had to be dealt with: how to launch Turin in the international context; how to integrate the city in the metropolitan area and in the region; how to enhance the local heritage; how to manage future population dynamics; how to diversify the local economy; how to promote sustainability; how to reduce inequalities. As one of the participants explained:

The groups were coordinated by civil society leaders, not by politicians, and we met in the Congress Center of the Industrial Union. Some of the working group coordinators were the vice-president of bank A, the president of company B, the chief executive of industry C, the general secretary of bank foundation D, the manager of financial company E, to name but a few.

The result of this phase was that the main policy directions were established, and the effort of the subsequent years mainly became one of implementation. Since 2001, policy-making has in fact moved exactly along the binaries formulated by the working groups, even though the 2001 Strategic Plan produced a broader and mainly symbolic vision of the city. One of the leaders who took part in the city dialogue admitted that 'some actions put in the Plan were there just because they had to be there, not because we thought they were priorities, but the concrete initiatives that have been initiated over the following years emerged during those working groups'.

According to the interviewees, the city dialogue was not free from conflicts (in particular, different perspectives emerged about which policy sectors should be the core ones), but it was determinant in facilitating a somewhat collective construction of the new urban agenda, for three main reasons. First, its informal but structured and somehow public nature stimulated a constructive approach in the governing coalition actors and the general appreciation of many other collateral actors. As a public chief executive who took part in the process stated:

This was actually the difference between the informal occasions we experienced in the past, lunching together or meeting in someone's house, and the process that started with the Forum for development: in the former case, we always finished up with complaining about the problematic situation of the city, the immobilism of the local society, and proposing the solutions that were closest to our own interests; in the latter case, we managed to think in a purposive and collective way. I can't precisely say why... maybe because of the more official and public nature of the process.

Second, the multi-vocal process, although restricted to an urban élite, somehow worked as a multiplier of windows of opportunity (Kingdon 1984; 2011), allowing various policy entrepreneurs to convey their ideas in a multi-sectorial arena and to confront with more and diverse policy actors than the usual ones involved in normal policy networks. This simultaneous convergence of different policy windows was not planned, but it was facilitated by the structured setting of the process, whose main aims were to create highly heterogeneous policy arenas focused on specific goals. Some policy entrepreneurs from the business sector recognized that this combined heterogeneity of the participants and policy sectors favored a more integrated agenda-building process and helped actors with different perspectives work on some common grounds. As two working group coordinators emphasized:

In those discussions, hitherto non-communicating worlds talked to each other and this allowed us to build something that was widely shared, not just a sum of purposes defended and advocated by people or groups.

The purposes we shared were not really new but we compared opinions with one another and reshaped the ones that had gained the highest consensus among people with diverse relevant interests and different perspectives on the city.

Finally, the city dialogue also led to an internal management of the conflicts, which reduced the subsequent costs of the collateral compensations that usually characterize any urban regime. As another member of the governing coalition recognized:

The working groups worked out aims and actions. Then, within this large matrix, policies often came to light incrementally or accidentally, but I think this is normal. Actually, the power of this initiative was mainly that tensions and disputes were dealt with during our discussions and not later. Most confrontations took place at this stage, and this generated confidence and more stable decisions.

Conclusion

Today, Turin is not exactly what the governing coalition hoped it would be. Its image has changed profoundly (Vanolo 2015), but it is not yet become a high-tech metropolis or a touristic city. The leading sector of the local economy still remains the manufacturing industry, although it has become significantly downsized, and the city again seems to be wondering about its future and about ways of overcoming the global economic crisis. However, these considerations pertain to another story, which concerns the effectiveness of an urban regime. Regardless of the performance of the regime, the coalition that has governed the city over the last twenty years has undoubtedly managed to introduce non-incremental change to the consolidated policy mix through an ambitious pro-growth agenda.

The attempt of the process-tracing analysis of this case has been to outline the key sequences that led to the emergence of the new agenda, in order to identify: a) the process through which a common frame was shaped by an emerging governing coalition, and b) the nature of the agenda-building process, in order to understand whether the policy agenda emerged as a by-product of a set of sectorial and almost independent policy-making processes or whether it was the result of a somewhat collective effort.

As far as the first question is concerned, the analysis of the Turin case has highlighted how a process of reflection and debate in several local social and political environments has led to the shaping of a common frame by several components of the local élite. The main goal (to change toward a pro-growth mix of policies) and three shared aims (to diversify and requalify the local economy, to start with policies that could foster local economic growth in the short-term, and to build a wide alliance between public and private actors) emerged from this incubation period. This process developed in three stages, which broadly recall the classic model of dispute emergence (Felstiner et al. 1980): a naming process, which led to a clear perception of the critical situation of the city, a blaming process against the past urban politics, through which a narrative of the causes and responsibilities was framed, and a claiming process, which produced some core beliefs and some key purposes for a shared goal. These findings also offer empirical evidence on the theoretically and empirically underdeveloped issue of *localism* in urban regimes (De Socio 2010). In fact, the incubation process in Turin had clear localist traits, since the protagonists were local and the framing process was also focused on local dynamics.¹³

The birth of the urban regime in Turin was officialized for the first time through the election of a mayor who was supported by a large coalition, composed of Center-Left wing forces and liberal components of the business community. The first policy changes were promoted through a new land-use regulation and some major infrastructures, but this was only the starting point to the development of trust within the rising governing coalition.

Although chance played a role in the sequencing and combination of the events, the Turin city dialogue - the somewhat public, informal and structured process of discussion that started with the Forum for development - was decisive in allowing the collective construction of the new urban agenda, whose highly symbolic outcome was the 2001 City Strategic Plan. The urban regime arrangements naturally also included negotiations and self-interested exchanges on single issues. However, the structured and city-wide process of discussion was important, because it influenced the strategies of

¹³ Also Pinson (2010) observed that urban governance in French cities (traditionally dominated by centre-periphery relations) is increasingly characterized by localism.

the governing coalition members. It fostered a purposive approach, favored wider support from collateral actors and worked as a collector of several policy windows, by gathering different policy entrepreneurs at the same venue, making them confront each other and reflect on their issues from different viewpoints over a relatively short period. Furthermore, it allowed conflicts among coalition partners to be managed during the decision-making process instead of afterwards, thus reducing obstructions and impasses during the implementation processes. These findings suggest that the ‘power to’ of urban regimes could develop not only through standard negotiations and sectorial policy-making processes, which are typical of urban governance, but also through a city-wide collective effort, in some way more deliberative, although not necessarily more inclusive or attentive to social justice.

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Tables and figures

Figure 1. One of the largest brownfields converted into a residential area and the new underground railway covered by the new main boulevard.



Source: www.urbancenter.to.it

Table 1. Research centers, business incubators and innovation poles in Turin

Until 1993		
Name of organization	Mission	Year
Fondazione per l'Interscambio Scientifico	research on complex systems	1983
Fondazione Rosselli	research on public policies	1988
Associazione per la Promozione dello Sviluppo Scientifico e Tecnologico del Piemonte	promotion of excellent research	1988
Centro Supercalcolo Piemonte	research on information and communication technologies	1988
Consorzio Interuniversitario per la Fisica Spaziale	research on astrophysics	1990
Fondazione per le Biotecnologie	technological innovation in life sciences	1991
International Center for Economic Research	research on economic topics	1991
After 1993		
Name of organization	Mission	Year
Istituto per la Ricerca e la Cura del Cancro	research on cancer	1996
Environment Park	business incubator in the environmental and renewable energy sectors	1996
Bioindustry Park	business incubator in the life-science engineering sectors	1999
Virtual Reality & Multimedia Park	multimedia business incubator	2000
Istituto Superiore Mario Boella	ICT research & development	2000
Ist. Sup. sui Sistemi Territoriali per l'Innovazione	research on territorial innovation	2002
Fondazione Torino Wireless	ICT research & development	2002
Fondazione Collegio Carlo Alberto	research on finance and labor economics	2004
GM Powertrain	research on engine engineering	2005
Centro di Conservazione e Restauro	arts and culture conservation techniques	2005
Centro design	automotive design	2006
Microsoft Center	research on genetics and brain memory processes	2007
Human Genetics Foundation	genetics research	2007
Torino Piemonte Aerospace	promotion of the aerospace sector	2007
Centro Ricerche SMAT	research on water treatment technologies	2008
Progetto ITACA	research on food quality and safety technologies	2010
Ecofood	research on waste treatment	2010

Table 2. Large events and the art system

Until 1993			
Event	Opening	Museums and cultural activities	Opening
Torino Film Festival	1982	Renovation of the Old Arts Building	1989
Gay Film Festival	1986	New Childhood Museum	1991
National Book Exhibition	1987		
After 1993			
Event	Opening	Museums and cultural activities	Opening
Artissima	1994	Renewal of the Egyptian Museum	1994
International Athletics meeting	1995	Inauguration of the Fondazione Sandretto for contemporary arts	1995
International Food Expo	1996	Art system in public spaces	1995
Environmental Film Festival	1998	Cinema Museum	2000
Chocolate Expo	2000	Film Commission	2001
Torino Spiritualità	2002	Renovation of the Gobetti Theater	2001
Terra Madre international meeting	2004	New History Museum	2003
‘Traffic’ Music Festival	2004	New Museum of the Environment	2004
European Ice-skating competition	2005	Renovation of the Valentino Castle medieval village	2004
‘Italyart’ Olympic Games	2005	Theater Fonderie Limone	2005
Winter Olympic Games	2006	Renovation of the Astra Theater	2005
Paralympics	2006	New Vittoria Theater	2005
World Fencing Championship	2006	New Theater for Young people	2005
Chess Olympics	2006	Renovation of the Royal Armory Museum	2005
University Olympics	2007	Renovation of the Carignano Theater	2005
World Architect conference	2008	New Merz Foundation	2005
Events for the World design capital	2008	Renovation of the Natural Science Museum	2006
European archery championship	2008	Renovation of the Mountain Museum	2006
Democracy Festival	2009	Renovation of the Royal Venaria Palace	2007
Events for the celebration of the anniversary of the Italian unification	2011	New Museum of Astronomy and aerospace	2007
		Renovation of the Queen’s Palace	2007
		New Museum of Antiques	2007
		Renovation of the Royal Palace	2007
		Renovation of the Mazzoni building	2008
		New Cultural Center at Spina 2	2008
		Renovation of the Automotive Museum	2011
		Partial renovation of the old Prison building	2011

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